

# society for social responsibility in science

## SSRS Newsletter

NO. 66

OCTOBER 1957

### HAVERFORD COLLEGE TURNS DOWN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S MONEY FOR SCIENCE RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Board of Managers of Haverford College announced September 27 that the College would not sponsor any applications for research grants from the Department of Defense.

"Since the Board interprets the philosophy of the Department of Defense as inconsistent with the peace principles of the Society of Friends, and since it sees increasing military control of research funds as a threat to free academic inquiry in America, the College will not apply for grants from the Department of Defense and its branches on behalf of any research project, military or non-military. In addition, military research will not be permitted on the campus...The Board continues to encourage the faculty to seek funds from appropriate sources for on-campus, non-military research. Furthermore, the Board holds that the source of such funds obtained by faculty members as individuals should not be the concern of the College..."

In this connection, a working definition of "military" was decided on: Research shall be termed 'military' when any or all of the following conditions shall accompany it: when the research itself is primarily military or when a military objective motivates the investigator to any degree or when the research is classified for security reasons or involves the security clearance of personnel or the publication of results is restricted."

This action settled a controversy which has been active for several months at the Quaker college.

Last autumn, three members of the

science faculty made known their desire to seek research grants from the United States Department of Defense.

A professor of chemistry, who had done research at another university on free radical reactions, asked permission from Haverford authorities to apply for a Defense Department grant to continue study of the unstable molecular fragments.

Soon, men from the Physics and Mathematics departments also proposed projects in pure research to be paid for out of Defense funds.

A debate followed which deeply stirred the campus. Haverford is proud of the pacifist tradition which has been a mark of Quakers for 300 years, and many feared that if the college became dependent on military funds, it would no longer be as free to criticize and oppose war and war-like actions by the United States Government.

There was also a definite feeling on the part of many faculty and students that the Defense Department knows what it is doing when it sponsors research, even research in pure science with no strings attached. The Defense Department pays for such research because in the long run it will probably help in developing ways to kill more people more efficiently.

If this is true, it is an argument not only against Defense Department-sponsored projects but against scientific research generally, and some of the opponents of Defense grants recognized this and accepted it; a professor emeritus of mathematics was quoted in the *Haverford News* as saying: "We are here at the College to teach boys, not to engage in research."

## LEGION VS. SSRS

VETERANS' ORGANIZATION DOES NOT  
WANT US TO BECOME CORPORATION

At the SSRS Annual Meeting September 8, the members approved a proposal to take steps to make the SSRS a legal corporation. The immediate reason for this step is that SSRS leaders hope to initiate a "Conference on the Constructive Uses of Science." Our officers had been told that money to finance such a conference might be contributed by one of the foundations, but only if the SSRS were a legal "not-for-profit corporation."

There are a number of other reasons why it would be wise for the SSRS to incorporate. One is that the Society would be protected against unauthorized use of its name.

Society officers filed articles of incorporation October 11 in Bucks County Court.

However, an attorney for the American Legion showed up in court and asked the presiding judge not to issue the charter of incorporation.

According to newspaper accounts, Attorney Cecil Harvey, county judge advocate for the Legion, said he could not understand the purposes of the SSRS as set forth in its constitution and asked that the court hold the application under advisement until an investigation can be made and more learned about the organization.

Another newspaper story indicated that the Legion's objection to the SSRS is based on the undoubted fact that several of the Society's present and former officers have a record of refusing to serve in the armed forces of the United States in World War II for reasons of conscience.

Because of this, Legion officials are said to feel that a charter of incorporation for the SSRS—or any other forward step for this organization—might be "not necessarily related to the protection of the strongest offensive military interests of the country."

The court decided to postpone issuing a charter of incorporation until a hearing could be arranged and facts submitted about the SSRS.



## SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE

**Purposes:** According to the constitution (which will be sent on request), the SSRS is organized "to foster throughout the world a functioning co-operative tradition of personal moral responsibility for the consequences for humanity of professional activity, with emphasis on constructive alternatives to militarism; . . . to embody in this tradition the principle that the individual must abstain from destructive work and devote himself to constructive work, drawing the line between the two according to his own moral judgment; . . . to ascertain through open and free discussion the boundary between constructive and destructive work to serve as a guide for individual and group decisions and action. . . ."

**Who decides whether a given type of work is acceptable?** This is a matter of individual moral judgment. The individual draws his own line. The SSRS brings together those who have drawn or wish to draw **some** line and are prepared to abstain from work beyond that line even at considerable risk or sacrifice. The SSRS has no official list of constructive and destructive work.

**What about projects of a military nature?** Such projects—secret or otherwise—sponsored by the military establishment, or projects of a definitely military nature sponsored by industrial or civilian organizations are suggested as possible types of destructive work. Some scientists have already drawn sharp lines, while others are undecided, or feel that boundary lines between constructive and destructive work cannot be so sharply drawn. Still others wish to consider the intent or motivation of the project's sponsor as a determining factor, rather than the type of project.

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## GRIN AND BEAR IT

By Lichty



"On Mars we found no trace of civilization . . . No trace of life . . . No trace of fall-out! . . . Obviously they perfected a clean H-bomb some time ago!"

George Lichty-- Chicago Sun-Times Syndicate

Albert V. Baez, Chairman of the SSRS Education Division in 1955-6, discusses nuclear tests in a letter to the *New York Times* (Sept. 9, 1957) which SSRS Newsletter readers will want to see in full.--T.K.

## To Cease Nuclear Testing

### Trend of Current Arms Race Termed Suicidal, Reversal Urged

The writer of the following letter headed the Technical Assistance Mission to Iraq for UNESCO (1951-52). Now Visiting Professor of Physics at Stanford University, his works include "Absolute Intensity of X-Ray Radiation."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

A group of citizens in our town concerned about the possible dangers of fall-out and other consequences of nuclear weapons formed a committee to promote the abolition of nuclear tests as a first step to stop the arms race which seems to have such dire possible consequences.

They felt they needed a scientist

on their committee and called on me to join them. I found myself in a situation which is typical of that in which many people today find themselves.

There were many questions in my mind and I was not sure that we should advocate cessation of tests. I was rather in favor of educating ourselves on the facts of fall-out and other possible dangers. Thinking that even in the course of exploratory thinking my training might be useful to such a group, I joined them mainly to explore the facts and to make them known, as Albert Schweitzer and Bertrand Russell have urged scientists to do.

As a result of much reading and thought I have come to the following stand, which I should like to state publicly if only to urge other scientists to take some stand on the very urgent question of nuclear warfare:

The use of nuclear weapons in war would produce unspeakable devastation. This is the act which must be averted.

H-bombs have had a deterrent effect, but to think that permanent peace may be obtained primarily by threat of annihilation is wrong. History shows that weapons which are

tested will be used. Morality indicates that destructiveness is wrong and annihilation unthinkable.

The cessation of tests can be a first step in checking the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more countries and easing world tensions.

### Views on Fall-Out Danger

Radioactive fall-out poses real dangers, but nothing like the devastation that the use of nuclear weapons in war would bring. Nevertheless, fall-out from testing may get out of hand and do harm to those now living and to those yet to be born.

As a result of my stand I have been asked to speak to several groups, mostly in churches and in homes. A disturbing discovery for me, since I am the son of a Methodist minister, has been the apathy and ignorance in church groups. It is greater than among intellectually motivated groups where many are agnostics.

It seems unbelievable that people with a Christian commitment still feel that "if the other fellow is carrying a stick I must carry a bigger stick in my hand" is an attitude which is compatible with Christianity in personal life and in national affairs.

I note with pleasure that the Friends have been willing to join with the Humanists in sponsoring talks by such men as the eminent geneticist, Prof. Hermann Muller, who has been outspoken about the hereditary ill effects of fall-out. But I lament the silence of the church groups.

Many people still justify the use of the H-bomb in Hiroshima "because it possibly reduced the number of American boys who would be killed in the war" with no apparent concern for the great destruction of Japanese lives, whereas the Humanists seem to say, "The destruction of lives on such a scale as Hiroshima or the unbelievably larger scale possible with H-bombs is wrong no matter who promotes it. Of course the latter point of view is closer to the Christian ethic. The disturbing thing is that so many nominally Christian leaders lack the courage to take the consequences of such a stand.

Let us urge the cessation of testing by all powers if possible, but unilaterally if necessary, as a first step to reverse the suicidal trend of the current arms race.

ALBERT V. BAEZ,  
Stanford, Calif., Sept. 2, 1957.



# BOOK REVIEW

*The Nature of Radioactive Fallout And Its Effects On Man: Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee on Radiation of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Congress of the United States.* 2 volumes, paperbound, 2065 pages. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. \$3.75 + \$2.75. Published September 27, 1957.

Within the memory of men now living, no subject of information has been more thoroughly confused, mixed up, distorted, muddled, muddled and twisted than has the subject of radioactive fallout and its dangers. Yet there is no subject on which it is more important to think clearly and act wisely.

Representative Chet Holifield (Dem., Calif.) is an able public servant who tries to act in public affairs not only in the interests of his constituents but for the welfare of the nation as a whole. He is a member of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. Early this year, as the confusion deepened, and as it began to seem that every time a scientist spoke about atomic fallout, another scientist rose to contradict him, Congressman Holifield saw his duty.

He arranged a set of hearings in Washington to which the country's top experts in the various scientific disciplines related to fallout were invited. Special care was taken to obtain representatives of all points of view when questions of scientific fact were under dispute. An effort was made, not only "to have a well-balanced presentation," but also "to delineate those areas where we have knowledge from those where we have little or no knowledge, with a view to determining those areas of research which need more intensive effort."

The hearings ran several hours a day for eight days—May 27, 28 and 29, and June 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1957. Each witness was asked to state the facts in clear, simple language, which could be understood by the general public. The witnesses were then questioned sharply by the Senators and Representatives present; they were invited to use the blackboard and to submit any photographs, graphs and charts necessary to make their message clear. The scientists were then permitted to file supplementary documents and other information.

Finally, all the scientific witnesses who had sat listening to each other's testimony were brought together for a round-table discussion and invited to comment on each other's evidence and interpretations.

For example, there were eleven scientists at the round table of June 6, 1957. Willard F. Libby, the only scientist on the Atomic Energy Commission, who is the outstanding authority on radiocarbon dating, and who has issued more reassuring statements on fallout than anyone else, was there. He confronted Walter Selove, University of Pennsylvania physicist who heads the Radiation Hazards Committee of the Federation of American Scientists. Selove's report that the strontium-90 concentration may already have exceeded the danger level was reported in the SSRS Newsletter for Nov. 1956.

Also present at this round table were Lester Machta of the U. S. Weather Bureau, who has headed the study of the worldwide distribution of fallout; William F. Neuman, Chief of the Biochemistry Section of the University of Rochester's Atomic Energy Project, which has supplied much evidence on the aging effects of radiation; James F. Crow, University of Wisconsin genetics expert; Austin Brues, Director of the Biological and Medical Division of Argonne National Laboratory and delegate to the U.N. Radiation Committee; Shields Warren, author of the recent study showing that radiation shortens the lives of radiologists; Merrill Eisenbud, who heads the A.E.C.'s fallout monitoring program; and others. Senators and Representatives also joined in the discussion. This round table covers 33 pages in transcript. Many other portions of the hearings are fully as meaty.

Many of the technical papers presented at the fallout hearings were new and reported unpublished material and facts which had just been observed. This vast mass of scientific information could not possibly be reported or even summarized in a one-column story in the next day's newspaper, or in a paragraph in the script of a television commentator.

As a result, *most of the new information brought out in the hearings has not yet been realized by the public.* The new information supersedes most of the statements made last year.

The hearings themselves use up only 1457 pages. The remainder of the two volumes is devoted to reprints which in themselves constitute a small but potent library of radiological information. For example, the 129-page British Medical Research Council study, "The Hazards to Man of Nuclear and Allied Radiations (1956), is reproduced in its entirety on pages 1539-1668.

The tremendous "Report by the World Health Organization on Genetic Effects of Radiation," (March 13, 1957) also is quoted in full in 99 closely-packed pages (pp. 1728-1827.)

The National Academy of Sciences Summary Reports on the biological effects of radiation appear here, also, along with the texts of all of AEC Commissioner Libby's technical papers and speeches on the subject of fallout. Hermann J. Muller's famous paper on "How Radiation Affects the Genetic Constitution" is here, the one the AEC prevented him from reading at the Geneva Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.

And the "hearings" wind up with a bibliography on fallout covering 57 pages of 6-point type.

As of today, this publication is undoubtedly the definitive work on fallout. It will remain so for at least two years, until several of the research projects now under way have been completed. Even then this publication will be of great value. A work of these dimensions is not done often—may never be done as thoroughly again in a single publication.

Now, the information contained in the fallout hearings is only partly comprehensible to the average non-scientific member of the public. Part of it, of course, is crystal clear to everyone. But some of the discussion becomes technical enough that a scientific background is a great help in reading it.

Hence the material needs to be worked over and digested before presenting it to the general public.

This is where responsible scientists should see their duty clear and plain. The facts related in the hearings need to be known by everyone, for the sake of the continued welfare of the human race. They are known by only a comparative handful at present. Scientists are better equipped to help disseminate this information than any other class of people. The document we are reviewing provides all the necessary background for an ordinary scientist to make himself a fallout expert.

We do not lightly say that a book is a "must". This reviewer has never before used that accolade. But the fallout hearings are a "must" for SSRS members who are concerned about the radioactive fallout problem. They are advised to spare no effort to obtain a personal copy.

We will have something to say about the specific facts brought out in the hearings, in another issue of this Newsletter.

--T.K.



# EDITORIAL

The last time we remember reading in the newspapers about the American Legion, prior to the time it interested itself in the SSRS a week or two ago, was in July of this year. In New Orleans, the American Legion joined with the local White Citizens Council to try to block the showing of a movie with an interracial theme, "Island In The Sun." The protests and pickets were disregarded at that time, and the movie was shown--to segregated audiences, of course.

A somewhat more famous recent episode involving the Legion was in connection with UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. For several years the Legion had been denouncing UNESCO as a promoter of world citizenship and had been trying to exclude UNESCO publications from libraries and schools. In 1955 the Legion responded to protests that it was damning an innocent group, by setting up a committee to investigate UNESCO. The committee, headed by former National Commander Ray Murphy, carefully read all the UNESCO publications and came to the conclusion that the charges were completely unfounded. At the next National Convention, Legionnaires shouted approval of a resolution denouncing UNESCO for "propounding world citizenship and adherence to a nebulous world government" in a session where no member of the Murphy Committee was allowed to speak or to report the Committee's findings.

At the same time, the Legion was passing resolutions opposing statehood for Hawaii and Alaska, opposing the admission of any displaced persons to this country, and opposing letting anyone into the United States who is a "slacker".

Shortly before this, the Legion had attacked the Girl Scouts for alleged "un-American one world ideas" in their publications. The YMCA and the YWCA

were similarly criticized. Apparently it is not difficult to win the antagonism of the Legion.

There is some evidence that the enmity of the Legion is not as fearsome as it once may have been. Since 1946, the Legion has steadily declined in total membership. After the elections of November 1956, the United Press reported that no House member who had voted against the Legion-sponsored veterans' pension bill had been defeated, while all House members who had voted for the bill, at the insistence of the Legion, had lost their seats.

The Legion is correct in its belief that several officers and leaders of the SSRS have a record of refusing on grounds of conscience to serve in the armed forces of the United States, Nazi Germany, and other nations.

But its interest in a small, insignificant organization like the SSRS has a very definite meaning. The meaning is that the SSRS is not as small and insignificant as it has been in the past. This Society is growing, and it is drawing the attention of people and of groups who ignored it in the past.

And this is a hopeful sign, because the great handicap of the SSRS has been that most people neither knew nor cared that we existed. As we grow, and as people notice us, even if they are hostile, we can move more rapidly toward the goal for which the SSRS was founded. That goal is to assist in the development of a code of ethics among the scientific professions, a code which recognizes each person's duty to act responsibly. --T.K.



With this issue, more than 100,000 copies of the SSRS Newsletter have been mailed out over an eight-year period. The Newsletter started as a small mimeographed bulletin, then became a highly developed letterpress reproduced magazine produced in Nebraska by the able efforts of Herbert Jehle. For three and one-half years the Newsletter has been a four-page Varityped monthly written, edited and typeset in Lombard, Illinois.

Circulation has grown from a few hundred to the present level of nearly 3000 per issue. Some libraries are placing the Newsletter in their archives. Ways are being planned and sought to increase the circulation to interested people and groups.

The Newsletter is largely the product of the volunteer labor of a few men, notably Franklin Miller of Gambier, Ohio, who has kept the mailing list up and operated the Addressograph since the first issue. His is truly a labor of love, and as he turns the hand-operated crank for the hundred-thousandth time, all members of the SSRS will pause to remember his efforts with gratitude.

## EMPLOYMENT

SSRS member, married, 28, now in prison as conscientious objector, hopes to be paroled to the San Francisco area early in 1958. M.S. Science, Col. of Agr., U. of Wisconsin. Interested in teaching or editorial work as well as conservation, agricultural and related fields. Job offers may be helpful in securing parole. An exceptional job outside the San Francisco Bay area might make parole to that area possible. Write Box 7 Terminal Island, San Pedro, California-

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